

1983

MARK TWAIN NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
(Calhoun District)  
GILBERT LAKE DIVISION

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT  
Calendar Year 1983

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Fish and Wildlife Service  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM

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#### A. HIGHLIGHTS

Weather conditions caused many farming changes. (Section F-4)

Cleaned out Gilbert Lake ditch. (Section I-2)

#### F. HABITAT MANAGEMENT

##### 2. Wetlands

Gilbert Lake was drained down as low as it could be drained using the silted in water control ditch. This was accomplished by the middle of July. The hot dry weather in August took care of most of the water that was left. By September the only water left was a pool about 10 yds. by 25 yds.

The weather made conditions just right for a fine stand of Chufa Grass in Gilbert Lake. After we were finally able to get water back on it, it received use by waterfowl.

##### 4. Croplands

Two cooperative farmers were scheduled to plant 59 acres of corn, 29 acres of soybeans, 16 acres of buckwheat, 5 acres of millet, and 5 acres of red clover.

Flood conditions changed all of this. Forty nine acres of corn, 39 acres of soybeans, 5 acres of buckwheat, and 5 acres of red clover were planted. Late planting and a dry growing season caused a low yield from 29 of the soybean acres. These 29 acres of soybeans were aerial seeded to wheat before they were harvested and 10 acres of beans were disked up after harvest and seeded to wheat. The wheat was browsed heavily by the Canada Goose population that uses this area from year to year.

##### 8. Haying

Fourteen acres of alfalfa mixed were mowed and baled for hay. Approximately 59 tons of hay were harvested.

The only utilization of this area by wildlife was as a resting area by geese.

##### 12. Wilderness and Special Areas

The Duncan Farm site an area owned by the Illinois Department of Conservation as a part of Pere Marquette State Park but managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service as a part of the Gilbert Lake Division is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as an archeological site.

The management of this area calls for maintaining native grass on



Brush (cottonwoods) encroachment on a farm field after it couldn't be farmed for two years because of flooding.

G.W.P. 9/1/83



This 1' to 2 foot of silt which was washed into the refuge road by a recent flood, shows why the refuge lakes and ditches are constantly filling in.

G.W.P. 9/1/83



Gilbert Lake in the process of drying up with the  
silted in water control ditch showing up on the right.

G.W.P. 9/1/83



Stand of chufa grass which resulted from the draining  
of Gilbert Lake.

G.W.P. 9/2/83

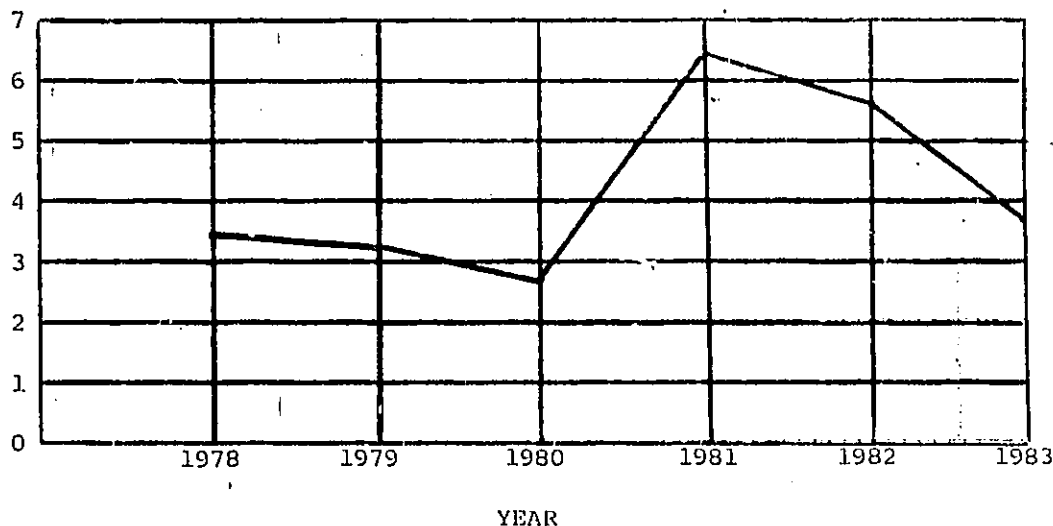
the mounds itself and no plowing of the 28.5 acres surrounding the mounds. The area can be disked up to 6 inches deep. At the present time it is planted to alfalfa and ladino clover.

## G. WILDLIFE

### 2. Endangered and/or Threatened Species

Bald Eagle use dropped 36% in 1983 to 370 use days. A peak of 5 birds occurred in February.

BALD EAGLE USE



### 3. Waterfowl

Duck use days totalled 274,787, an increase of 34% from 1982. Mallards accounted for 49% of this use. The largest concentration of ducks occurred in November when a peak of 6,665 was reached. Duck production for the year was 110 mallards, 30 blue-winged teal, and 375 wood ducks.

As was common throughout the rest of the refuge, goose use decreased significantly from 1982 on the Gilbert Lake area. Snow/blue goose use days totalled 46,710, down 68% from last year, while Canada goose use days fell to 25,035, down 76% from last year.

Coot use days totalled 33,020.

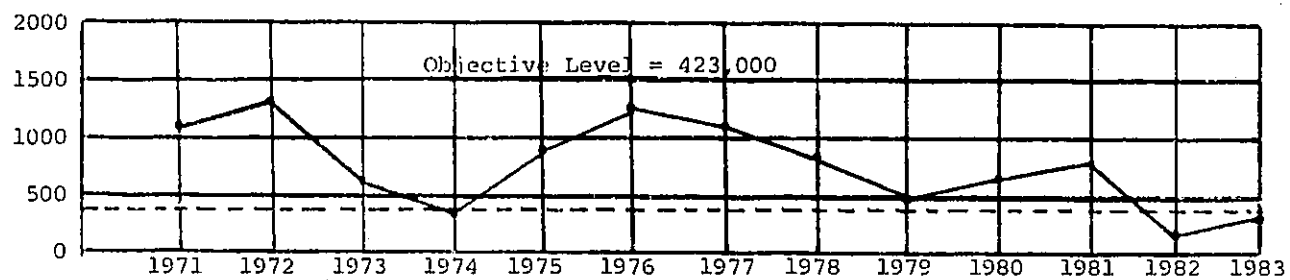




Mallards against a backdrop of bright fall foliage.

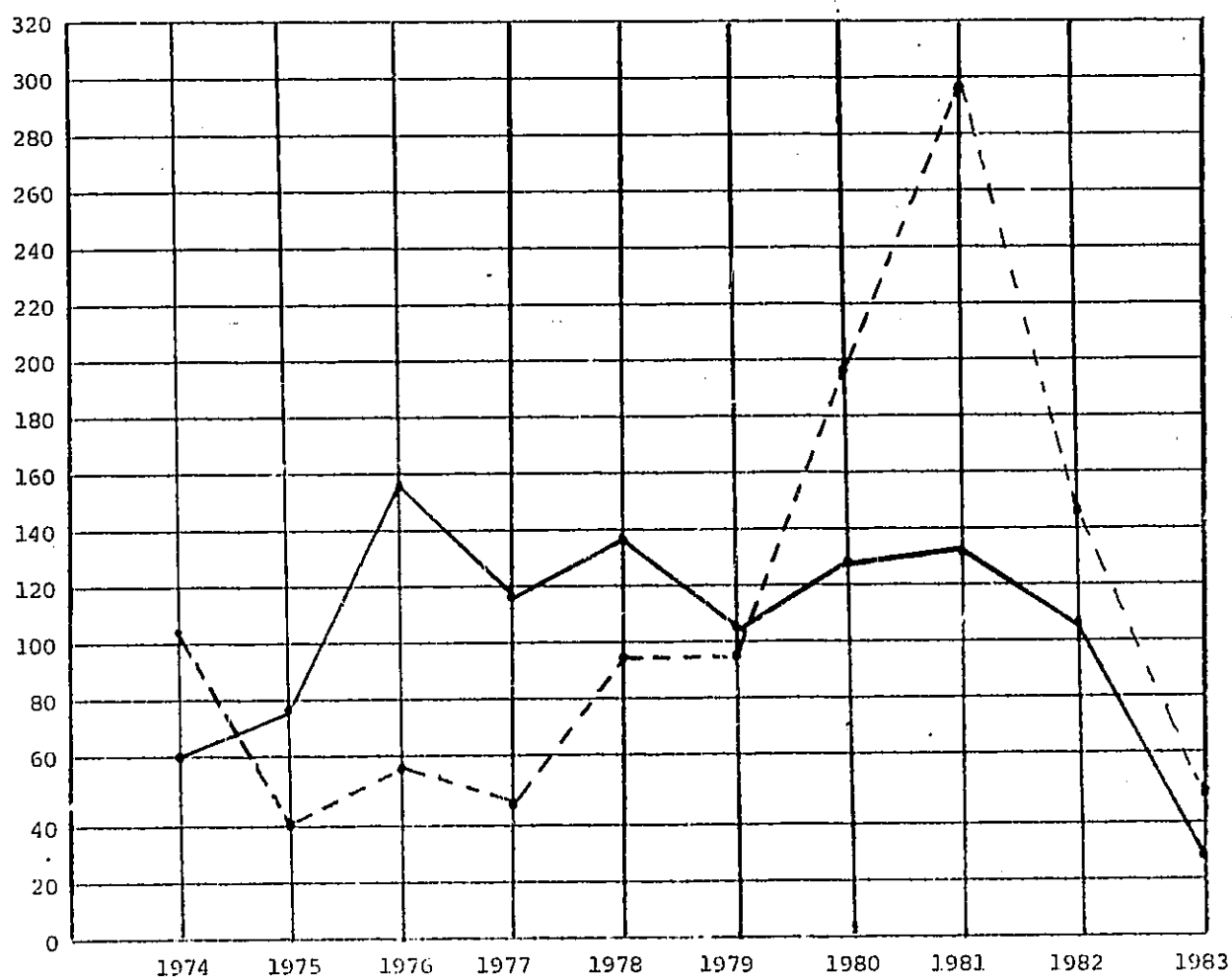
G.W.P 12/1/83

Use Days in Thousands



Duck Use Days - Gilbert Lake Division

Use Days in Thousands



-----Blue/Snow Geese

———Canada Geese

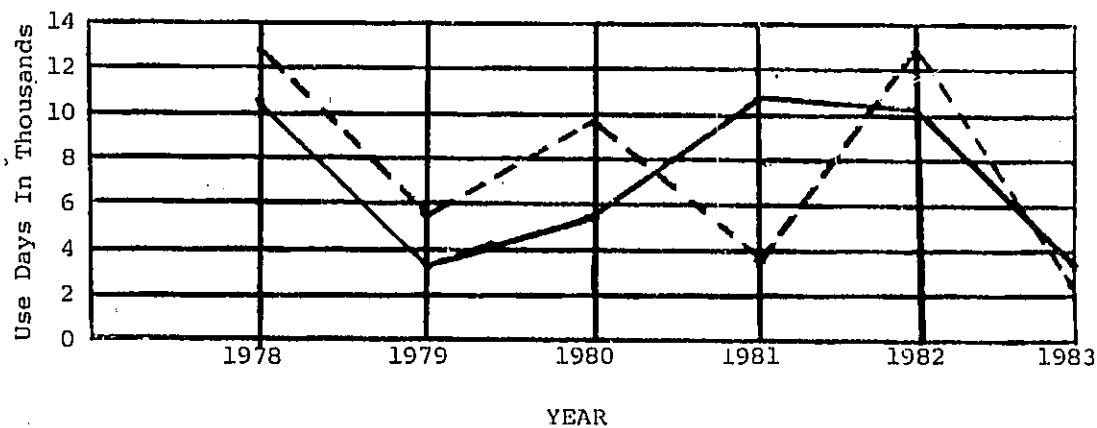
Goose Use Days - Gilbert Lake Division

#### 4. Marsh and Water Birds

Great blue herons, little blue herons, double-crested cormorants, green herons, pied-billed grebes, and common egrets accounted for 3,990 use days this year. The great blue heron was the most numerous species.

#### 5. Shorebirds, Gulls, Terns, and Allied Species

Eight species accounted for 2,760 use days. The pectoral sandpiper, semipalmated sandpiper, and killdeer were found in greater numbers than any other species in this group, they accounted for most of the use days.

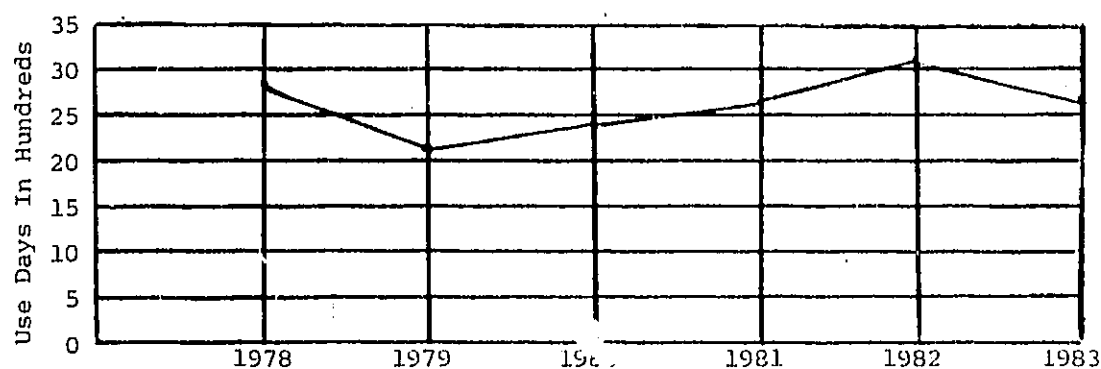


—— Marsh and Water Bird Use Days  
 ----- Shorebirds, Gull, Tern, and Allied Species Use Days

#### 6. Raptors

Species from this group, including the red-tailed hawk and marsh hawk, accounted for 2,630 use days. Use by the red-tailed hawk made up 42% of this total and was the most common species found on the area.

RAPTOR USE





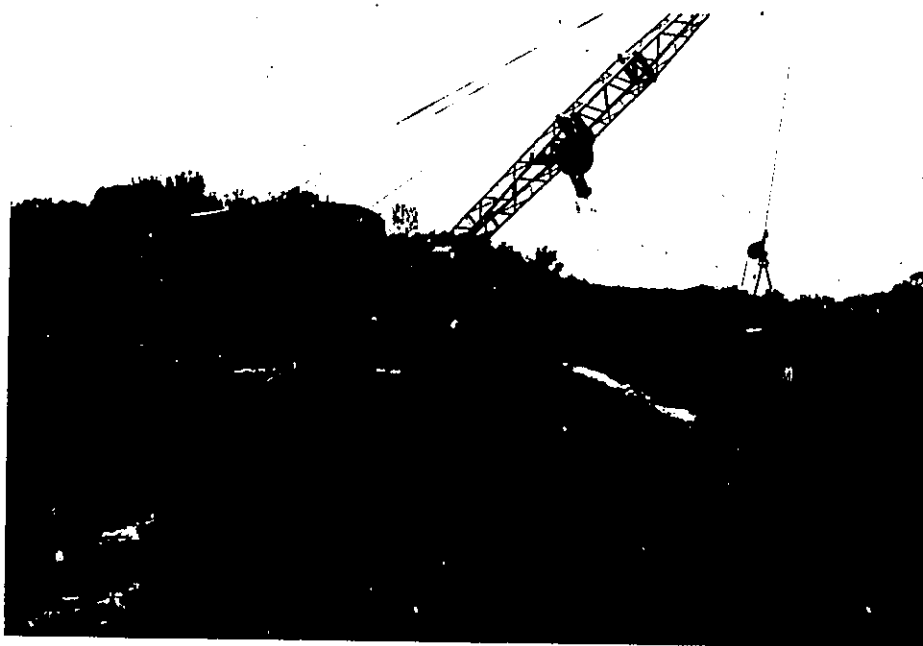
Mud flying during the blasting of Gilbert Lake water control ditch

G.W.P. 9/2/83



Ditch cleaned out by previous blasting activities.

G.W.P. 9/2/83



Maintenance mechanic Simon operating the refuge dragline, finishing up the ditch cleanout that could not be blasted because of soil moisture conditions.

G.W.P. 10/1/83

8. Game Mammals

The deer population was heavy at times as they came down from Pere Marquette State Park to feed in the Gilbert Lake cornfields. Five to six deer have been seen at times feeding in the refuge corn.

II. PUBLIC USE

1. General

Total public use visits to Gilbert Lake was 1,842 visits a sharp decrease from 1982. This was caused to a large extent by a reduction in the number of visitors who stopped on the overlook, off of state highway 100, to observe geese feeding in the refuge corn and wheat fields.

11. Wildlife Observation

The only public use on Gilbert Lake is wildlife observation either by walking along the refuge maintenance road between the Illinois River and Gilbert Lake or by stopping in a vehicle on the refuge overlook road.

I. EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

2. Rehabilitation

An explosives expert was called in to open up 1,000 feet of water control ditch leading from Gilbert Lake to the water control structure. Three thousand feet of ditch were to dry to be blasted so maintenance-man Simon used the refuge dragline to dig it out.

Several acres of brush in Gilbert Lake were cleared using the refuge's dozer.

4. Equipment Utilization and Replacement

A low-boy trailer and tractor was rented to have the refuge dozer and dragline hauled to Gilbert Lake and back.